

Circ.: m. 21,046
S. 23,963

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NOV 26 1957

Wives of Brass Play Host To Stranded Servicemen

By JANE EADS

WASHINGTON — A free Christmas feast with many of the goodies prepared by wives of the top brass awaits some lucky but lonely service men stranded in the capital over the holidays.

The dinner, one of a number of holiday meals served during the year, will be dished up at the Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen's Club, whose doors have never closed since it was opened in 1893, the only club in the United States owned and operated by service women.

"It is a home away from home for enlisted men of all branches of the Armed Forces," says Mrs. Charles P. Cabell, wife of Air Force Lt. Gen. Cabell, deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, who is a vice president of the club. "It's a real home because the boys may stay there overnight and they're looked after by real mothers."

One of these "real mothers," Mamie Eisenhower, kept the cash register and worked many long hours there during World War II. Mamie is a life member of the club and its honorary president. She says it's her favorite club. The President recently sent over a stock of his mystery stories to the library, which is in the charge of Mrs. Walter Bedell Smith, wife of the former Army general and former U. S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

Another "real mother" dedicated to making the club homey for the boys is Mrs. Arthur MacArthur, whose Navy captain husband, a brother of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, died in 1923. Mrs. MacArthur had five children. Douglas MacArthur II, ambassador to Japan, is her son. She rarely misses getting to the club Sunday mornings at 7:30 o'clock to give a fine breakfast to some 200 or more men.

"We had to turn away 40 or

more who wanted to stay here last night," she said, regretfully.

"Sometimes they stick around any way and we find them next morning curled up on sofas and chairs."

In 1956, according to club president, Mrs. Herman Feldman, wife of the former quartermaster general, 18,340 men were lodged at the club and countless others used the facilities offered for just a rest, a bath or a shave.

The club was organized in 1872 by the wives of officers of the Armed Forces, who "visualized the spiritual and temporal needs of the enlisted men in the Armed Forces."